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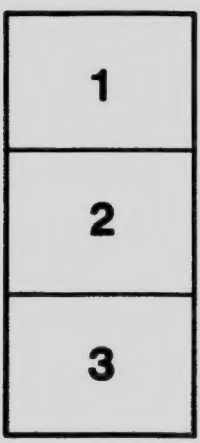

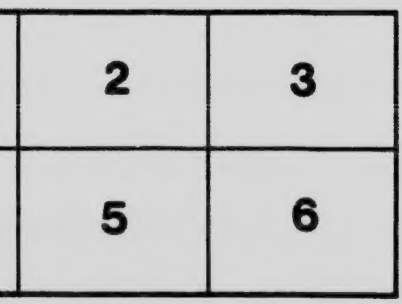

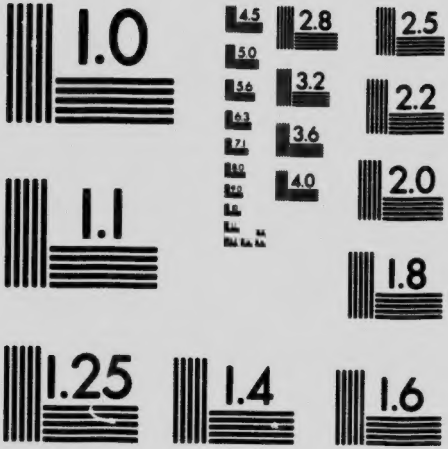

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MM54
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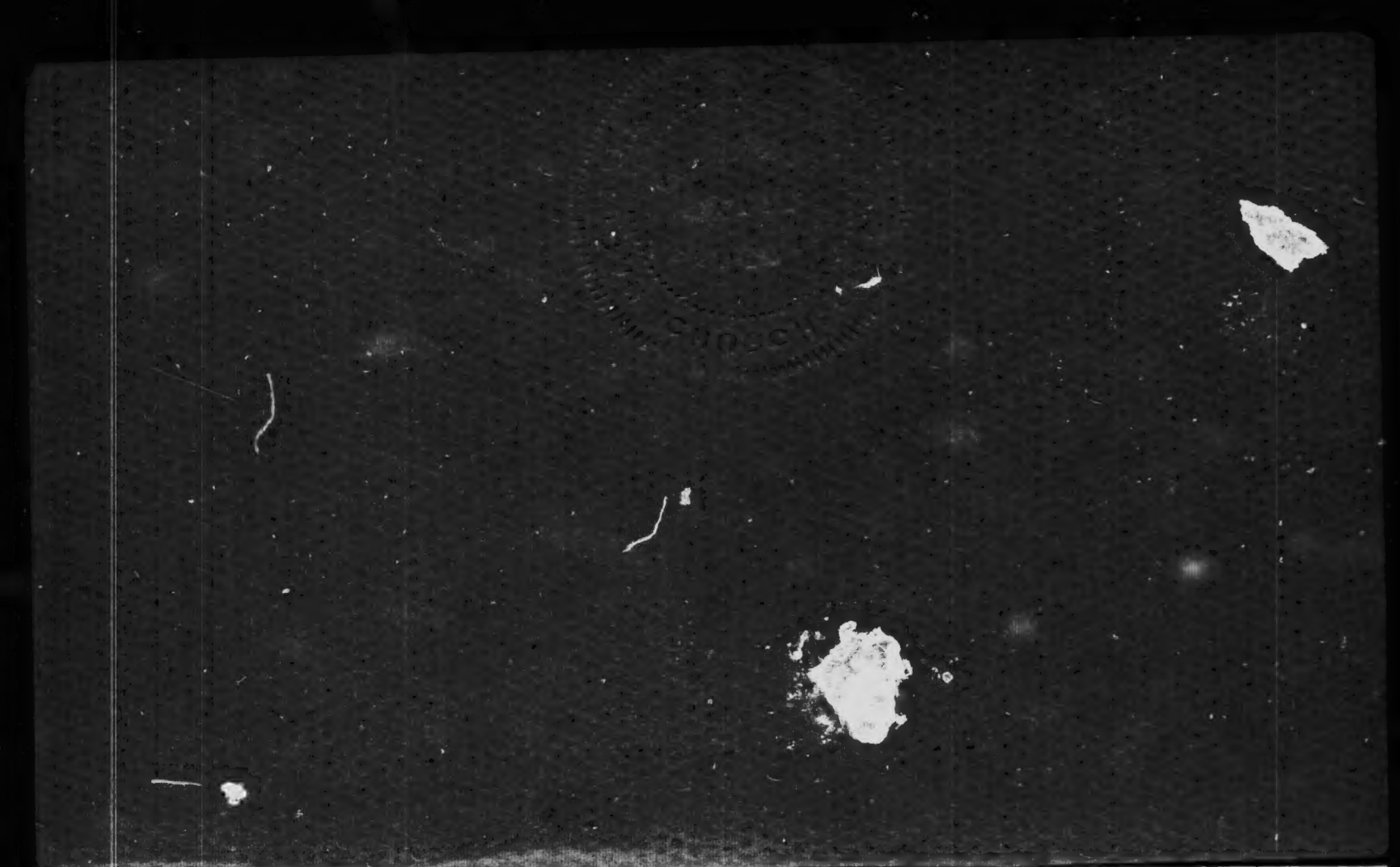
"The Roman Catholic Religion Discussed."

A SERMON PREACHED BY

Rev. E. A. Langfeldt, M.A.

RECTOR OF ST. LUKE'S CHURCH

PETERBOROUGH



MM54
L117

Sermon to Orangemen

I. Tim. II.: 5. I. Tim. VI: 20, 21.

"To resist by all lawful means the ascendancy, extension and enroachment of the Church of Rome, at the same time to be careful always to abstain from all unkind words and actions towards its members," *is* one of the obligations that you undertake to carry out when you become members of the Loyal Orange Association. It is in this spirit of charity, coupled with firmness in matters that pertain to our faith, that I desire to address you to-night. At no time was a clear understanding regarding Romanism more needed than to-day.

The speaker hoped the time would speedily come when the Roman Catholic laity would throw off the shackles of priestcraft and enjoy the liberty of conscience and universality of salvation which Christ the only Priest has procured fyr them. In order that Protestants might defend their position and meet effectively the arguments of Roman proselytizers he desired to speak on some features of Romanism.

At the very outset I must make this statement that all my quotations and references are from the Douay or the Roman Bible and Roman Books of Devotion and Articles.

Always remember that we possess the old

religion, and the Roman Catholic religion is the new religion. I challenge any priest to point out a single doctrine contained in the Word of God that we Protestants do not believe. If our religion is in the Bible, surely it must be older than the Reformation. On the other hand, surely the religion of Rome is a new one. How old is the doctrine of the Pope's Infallibility? Why, it was made an article of faith in our life time. It was not until 1870 that the Roman Catholic Church decided that the Pope is infallible. Then, how old is the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception? It was born in 1854. Surely that is a new religion. The old Protestant religion is the best.

Let us now come closer to my subject. To deal fully with it, it would of course be necessary to go over the whole controversy between Romanism and Protestantism. Therefore I must confine myself to one point, which is of the greatest importance. In a pamphlet written by the late Ca dinal Manning on the Vatican Decrees, he states that the celebrated Bull of Boniface VIII, Unam Sanctam, is "an *infallible act*," obliging all Roman Catholics to receive it with *interior ascent*. It concludes as follows: "Moreover we declare, affirm, define and pronounce it to be necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pontiff."

Well, according to this Bull there is a very poor outlook for us Protestants. We are told it is necessary for our salvation that we should join the Pope; but if God does not require us to submit to the Pope, Roman Catholics are in a very sad condition.

Let us see what the Roman Catholic Bible says on this subject. With regard to the Pope, the silence of Scripture is most eloquent against the Papal claims. The New Testament tells us who is the Head of the Church. Turn to Ephes. 1:22. "And He hath put all things under His (Christ's) feet ; and hath made Him head over all the Church, which is the body and the fulness of Him who is filled all in all."

Here it is said that Christ is the Head of the Church, but it is not said that the Pope is the head of the Church. We all know that the true Church of Christ, which shall last for ever in Heaven, is one body, and it has, therefore, only one Head. A body with two heads would be a monstrosity.

Let us turn now to Ephesians iv:16, "But performing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow in Him who is the Head, Christ."

Here again is not one word about the Pope. In Colossians i:18 we read: "And He is the Head of the Body, the Church."

Christ and Christ only, is declared to be the Head of the Church, but not a word is said about the Pope. How can Roman Catholics account for it? If they will only seriously think about these matters they will come to the conclusion that the Bible is a Protestant book.

Now let us turn to the Creed Pope Pius IV. On page 243 of Bruno's Catholic Belief you will find this Creed, which every Roman Catholic Priest is bound to profess, and to which, until quite recently, every one who joined the Church of Rome had to subscribe:

"I acknowledge the Holy, Catholic Apostolic, Roman Church for the mother and mistress of all Churches, and I promise true obedience to the Bishop of Rome, successor of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and Vicar of Jesus Christ."

I want to remind you that there is a Vicar of Christ upon earth and He is God the Holy Ghost. Woe be to the man who blasphemously assumes the prerogative of God, the Holy Ghost. But here we have it claimed that the Church of Rome is the "mother" of all churches. Now, if you open your Bibles, you will find that there was a Church in Jerusalem, before there was a Church in Rome. The mother church of Christendom is the church that was born at Jerusalem, the Bishop of which was James, and his successors of which—in outer form at least—are the Eastern Churches. Now, as it is an acknowledged fact that the Church of Rome did not exist until long after the Church of Jerusalem, how can it be the mother of all churches? Cardinal Baronius, a great and very learned Roman Catholic historian, in his "Annals of the Church" says the Church of Rome was born in the year A. D. 45. The same learned authority states that the British Church was born in the year A. D. 35—ten years before the Church of Rome. How, then, can the Church of Rome be the mother of the English Church, which was in Britain before the Papal church came into existence? I think that this statement ought to settle all the claims of Rome on the score of our allegiance to her. If she has in any sense been

a mother to the Church of England, it has been as a cruel stepmother.

You notice in the article of the creed I have just quoted, that it is claimed that St. Peter was Prince of the Apostles. But was he? If you refer to St. Luke xxii:24-26 you will find an account of a dispute between the Apostles as to which of them should be the greatest. Did not the Apostles know? Were they not acquainted with the first article of the Roman Catholic religion which declares that St. Peter was the chief of the Apostles? *No.* They could not settle the question themselves, and therefore they asked the Lord Jesus Christ to decide it for them. *The Saviour* decided the question on the Protestant side, for He said that the Apostles were all equal, and He told them that one should not claim pre-eminence over the others. *Therefore* we claim that St. Peter was not chief of the Apostles. If he were the Saviour would have distinctly told the Apostles so when the dispute arose. *It is certain* St. Paul did not believe St. Peter to be Prince of the Apostles. In his Epistle to the Gal. ii:11 he wrote: "But when Cephas (i. e. St. Peter sometimes so called) was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was blameable."

This was on a matter of church discipline —whether they should eat with Gentiles or not. Here we read that St. Paul opposed St. Peter, the Head Pope,—the man who was to be obeyed in all things according to Roman Catholic theology. If an English Roman Catholic priest were to go to the Vatican, and withstand Pius. x. to the face,

he would get a hot time of it. In the good old days of Popery, when she had a free hand, he would have been put in the dungeons of the Inquisition. You see, my friends, what a grand Protestant St. Paul was.

Roman Catholic controversialists make a great deal of St. Matthew xvi:18.

"Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

"Yet there are some Roman Catholic controversialists who think this text does not help their church very much. In the "Church and the Sovereign Pontiff" translated from the French by the Rev. Patrick Costello, we read that Jesus said: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church . . . . I will give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven . . . . I have prayed for thee, that thy faith should never fail . . . . feed my lambs, the faithful, feed also my sheep the pastors who shall be subject to thee, and who shall in effect always recognize in St. Peter the pre-eminence of dignity, office and power which Christ conferred on him" (page 6).

All this is put between inverted commas, as though it proceeded from the mouth of our Saviour Himself. It is sought to persuade people that Christ said we should always recognize in Peter "the pre-eminence of dignity, office and power." *Christ said* nothing of the kind, and the passage I have just cited is a gross forgery of the Word of God. In the Creed of Pope Pius IV we read that we are to be guided in the interpreta-

tion of Holy Scripture by the "unamious consent of the Fathers."

Let us see what the Fathers have got to say on the subject. We find they are all at sixes and sevens, and that there is no such thing as "unanimous consent."

There was present at the Vatican Council in 1870 the very learned Dr. Kenrick, of the United States. He died a few years since whilst Archbishop of St. Louis. He wished to make a speech against the Pope's Infallibility before the Vatican Council. He did not wish to speak merely against the advisability of defining it, but against the doctrine itself, as being untrue. At that time the Pope was also King of Rome, and when he discovered what Kenrick wanted to do, he declared that he should not be allowed to read his speech, and lest the speech should be circulated amongst members of the Council, the printers of Rome were forbidden to print it. It was therefore printed at Naples. I have a complete translation of this document. That it is genuine is certain, for Cardinal Manning says it is. Archbishop Kenrick said :

"The rule of Biblical interpretation imposed upon us is this : that the Scriptures are not to be interpreted contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers. It is doubtful whether any instance of that unanimous consent is to be found. But this failing, the rule seems to lay down for us the law of following, in their interpretation of Scripture the major number of the Fathers, that might seem to approach unanimity. Accepting this rule, we are compelled to abandon the

usual modern exposition of the words, "On this rock will I build my Church."

"In a remarkable pamphlet "printed in *fac-simile* of manuscript," and presented to the Fathers, we find five different interpretations of the word *rock*, in the place cited; "the first of which declares" (I transcribe the words) "that the Church was built on *Peter*; and this interpretation is followed by *seventeen* Fathers—among them, by Origen, Cyprian, Jerome, Hilary, Cyril of Alexandria, Leo the Great, Augustine.

"The second interpretation understands from these words, "On this rock will I build my Church," that the Church was built on *all* the Apostles, whom Peter represented by virtue of the primacy. *And this* opinion is followed by *eight* Fathers—among them, Origen, Cyprian, Jerome, Augustine, and Theoderet.

"The third interpretation asserts that the words, "On this rock," etc., are to be understood of the *faith* which Peter had professed—that this faith, this profession of faith, by which we believe Christ to be the Son of the living God, is the everlasting and immovable foundation of the Church. *This interpretation* is the weightiest of all, since it is followed by *forty-four* Fathers and doctors; among them, from the East, are Gregory of Nyssa, Cyril of Alexandria, Chrysostom, Theophylact; from the West, Hilary, Ambrose, Leo the Great; from Africa, Augustine.

"The fourth interpretation declares that the words, "On this rock," etc., are to be understood of that rock which Peter had

confessed, that is, *Christ*—that the Church was built upon Christ. This interpretation is followed by *sixteen* Fathers and doctors.

"The fifth interpretation of the Fathers understands by the name of *the rock* the *faithful* themselves, who, believing Christ to be the Son of God, are constituted living stones out of which the Church is built."

You see there are five interpretations, and the Fathers who teach the Protestant interpretation as to "*the Rock*" are nearly three times as numerous as those who hold the Roman Catholic interpretation. Archbishop Kendrick concluded by saying: "If we are bound to follow the majority of the Fathers in this thing, then we are bound to hold for certain that by *the rock* should be understood *the faith* professed by Peter *not Peter* professing the faith."

I do not see how Roman Catholics can get out of this difficulty. It would have been a sad thing for the church if she had been built upon Peter. *St. Peter fell, did he not? He fell terribly*, for he cursed and swore that he never knew the Lord of Glory. If a house is built upon a falling foundation it must come down. Thank God, the church is built on something firmer than Peter, *even the faith professed by Peter.*

"The gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." *This is not a promise of infallibility.* It is a promise of perpetuity. It means that there shall never be a time when there shall not be a Church of Christ upon earth. The promise was, that, no matter how the Church might be persecuted, no matter how many might be slaughtered by

the enemies of Christ, there should never come a time when there should not be left some of its flock upon earth. The text certainly does not refer to the Church of Rome

This brings me to a statement once made by a priest. He denied that there is in the Church of Rome any intervention between the sinner and the Saviour. Here, again, I am astonished. If anything prevents me from going directly to a man, surely it becomes an intervention between him and me. What is the teaching of the Church of Rome on the subject of intervention? In Volume 1., part 2, page 543 of the Catechism of the Council of Trent we read :

"No one can gain admission into heaven, unless its gates be opened by the priest."

According to this catechism, not one of us Protestants can enter heaven. My dear friends, this is the side of the question which Roman priests wish to keep in the background. They want to make out that after all there is not much difference between Protestantism and Romanism on most points. It is our duty to show you the other side of the question.

On page 545 of the same catechism we read :

"Everyone is bound to have recourse to confession, without which no one, who is weighed down with conscious guilt, can hope for salvation."

Well, I hope none of you will confess to a Roman priest. We all want to go to confession, and we all want a Priest ; not a priest who is a man, but our Priest is the Great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, and

whoever goes to Him in confession, whether it be man or woman, is never asked dirty questions. What would Roman Catholics do if they went to some deserted island, where they could not see a priest for perhaps ten years ? How would they get rid of their sins ? Their only chance would be by going straight to Christ. If such a course is good for a deserted island, it is good for every country.

Is it not a grand thing for us Protestants to have a High Priest who is always in the confessional box ? If we are far away in distant lands He is just as near as at home.

In "Miller's Catechism" on page 377 there is a great deal that the Roman Catholic priests would not think of quoting on a public platform. What for instance, do you think of these extracts ?

"*Question.* But would not God forgive our sins if we were to confess them to [illegible] alone?

"*Answer.* By no means, as otherwise the full power which Christ gave to the priests, of forgiving and retaining sins, would be vain and useless."

Here you are told it is not good going direct to God. You must go to the priest. Is not that intervention ? Is not that coming between man and his Saviour ? We say to these priests : "stand out of the light."

Again on page 97, we find the following :

"*Question.*—Now, do you think God the Father will admit into Heaven those [reference is made to Protestants] who thus make liars of His Son Jesus Christ, of the Holy Ghost and the Apostles ?

"*Answer.*—No ; He will let them have

their portion with Lucifer in hell, who first rebelled against Christ, and who is the father of liars.

"*Question.*—Have Protestants any faith in Christ?

"*Answer.*—They never had.

"*Question.*—Why not?

"*Answer.*—Because there never lived such a Christ as they imagine and believe in."

That is not a very nice way to speak about us Protestants. Here are other quotations from the same book:

"*Question.*—Are Protestants willing to confess their sins to a Catholic bishop or priest, who alone has power from Christ to forgive sins? "Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them."

"*Answer.*—No, for they generally have an utter aversion to confession, and therefore their sins will not be forgiven throughout all eternity.

"*Question.*—What follows from this?

"*Answer.*—That they die in their sins and are damned.

"*Question.*—Do Protestants love the Mother of God and the Saints?

"*Answer.*—They do not, or they would not ridicule and blaspheme the Mother of God and the Saints.

"*Question.*—What follows from this?

"*Answer.*—That Protestants will never be admitted into the company of the Saints in heaven, whom they have ridiculed and blasphemed on earth."

Where is the charity of the Church of Rome? Go to the records of the Inquisition and of the Smithfield fires for Popish "char-

ity." Go to the history of some Protestant lecturer for Popish "charity," where the speakers have had to be escorted by scores of policemen to save their lives.

My friends, the priest does intervene between the sinner and his Saviour, and it is the work of Protestants to remove these barriers.

I would warn you, my brethren, against the schemes of Popish priests regarding marriage between a Protestant and Roman Catholic of either sex, to further the growth of their church. I cannot think of any Protestant, who is a sincere believer in Jesus Christ, to thus sell his birthright by leaving the light of the Gospel and to accept in its place the Romish superstition and darkness for the sake of a woman or man. I would exhort our young men and women to shun every company that might make them to trifle with their holy faith for the sake of sensuality, for nothing else can such a league be called.

In the Church of Rome, since Apostolic times, there have been schisms and divisions Have you never heard of the time when there were two or three Popes together, cursing one another like mad ? To this day no one knows which was the real one. Have you not heard of the divisions in the olden time about the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception,—how the Dominicans took one side, and the Franciscans the other, and both cursed one another right heartily ? And again, have you not heard how the Roman Catholics were divided on the question of Papal Infallibility ? Keenan's Catechism is a sore

point with Roman Catholics even now. Pay special attention to this extract from page 112:

"Question.—Must not Roman Catholics believe the Pope in himself to be infallible?

"Answer.—This is a Protestant invention, it is no article of the Catholic faith, no decision of his can oblige, under pain of heresy, unless it be received and enforced by the teaching body, that is the Bishops of the church."

That was written before they made the Pope infallible. It was a Protestant invention then, but it is good Roman Catholic doctrine now. That is the church which boasts she is always the same, she never alters, and never has any disunion whatever.

Very frequently we hear it charged against Protestants by Roman Catholics that Protestants are divided. There is more unity among us than they suppose. I challenge anyone to deny the existence of the following marks of real unity between all true Protestants :

1.—Protestants are united in submitting to one Head of the Church only. There is not the slightest difference of opinion amongst us on this point.

2.—We are united in professing faith in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, Three Persons and One God. Amongst all Protestants of the Evangelical Churches there is not the slightest shadow of a difference on this point.

3.—We are all united in accepting the Bible as the one and only rule of Faith, and the only infallible guide from earth to heaven

4.—We are united in accepting the two

Sacraments of the Christian Church—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

5.—We are united—and never forget that this is the most important of all—we are united, those of us who are God's children, in a true spiritual blood-relationship with all who are in heart and life children of God. "All ye are brethren." Ours is the real unity of the family life. What is a family? It consists of father, mother, brothers and sisters. They make one family because there is a blood-relationship existing between them. They may quarrel, but that will not destroy the blood-relationship, for they will be one family as long as they remain on earth. Is it not the same in the spiritual sphere? You and I, by being born again of the Holy Spirit, have secured a spiritual blood-relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that makes us brethren. We may quarrel on the way, but still our quarrels do not destroy our relationship. We have Christian unity, and do not need to look for it.

6.—We are united in acknowledging Jesus Christ as our only Sacrificing Priest, and His Sacrifice as the only One for the sins of the whole world.

In closing, my dear brothers, I urge you to be steadfast in your faith. Let no personal interest or political favours ever induce you to forget your obligations to stand by the Protestant faith. Be Protestants, loyal subjects of Christ first, before you consider home or country. And on the coming glorious 12th, let your light shine as strong men in the faith, loyal to our God and

country, and charitable towards all. Hold high your motto of "No Surrender" and in your daily life carry out the principle of the life of your Saviour. May God bless you and our common cause to exalt Christ as the only Priest, Mediator, and King of Kings.